St. Anne's National School
Scoil Áine Naofa

Communications Policy

A policy outlining procedures regarding communications across the school community in St Anne's School 17674B

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Introduction:

St Anne's is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere across the school community. Respect for each person is promoted and valued, be it for the individual child, teacher, support staff, parent or visitors to St Anne's.

All members of the school community strive to create an open and welcoming atmosphere where good communications are fostered and developed.

Effective communication between teachers, principal and parents is imperative and is in the best interests of the children's education, care and wellbeing while in school. Parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children and provide knowledge and insights for teachers to support children. In addition to formal structures such as PTMs, communication is particularly encouraged where there are changes in family circumstances, in a children's learning and social behaviours; this should be done as soon as possible in order to support the child with immediate effect.

Teachers are recognised as professionals in education and work in partnership with parents. It is expected that communication with staff, and by staff, is done in an orderly and respectful manner and through the recognized channels (see below).

Aims of our Communication Policy:

This policy was developed by the staff of St Anne's in consultation with the Board of Management and representatives of the PSG. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in our school

Through effective communication we hope**:**

- To build a school community which is supportive of pupils, staff and all members of the school community who serve the school
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress, needs, interests and attainment
- To enrich and optimise the educational opportunities provided for our pupils by accessing the skills and talents of all of the school community
- To promote a culture of partnership in the education of our children

In St Anne's we are aware of environmental impact of communicating in hard copy. We are working each year to reduce the amount of paper being used/sent home and to increase digital communication.

The Communications policy is linked to other policies in the school, the Data Protection policy and the Acceptable Use policy (see school website)

In the current climate of Covid-19 restrictions, communication and work schedules are sent via the See Saw app for all children. Accommodation, where possible, is made for families who are not in a position to use technology effectively. It is expected that a blended learning scenario will be in place going forward into next year, combining on-site and home schooling. (see appendix on Home Schooling attached for your information).

Types of Home/ School Communication at St.Anne's:

Aladdin Connect App *Set up through the school office*	The app is used for: -Texts with updates from school - Texts from the class teacher - Payment through Aladdin Connect for booklists, tours - Children's Annual Reports Reports detailing pupil progress during the academic year are issued in June through the Aladdin system. This generally occurs a week/fortnight in advance of the end of the school year and parents may consult with teachers before the end of the year if they have any queries on same - Schedule for parent/teacher meetings New functions that will be introduced in 20/21 - Permissions for children to attend events; permissions for photos etc and signing up to school policies - Parents note for children's absences *Note: The school is obliged to send Information to TUSLA re children who are more than 20 days absent in any given year and must record reasons for absences*
Newsletter & Calendar of Events *Parents sign up for this on the school website and receive a notice when a new newsletter is uploaded*	Issued monthly (end of month) with review of events in the school for that month and may refer to gallery for photos of events A calendar of events will be made available on the website for parents on a termly/monthly basis
Email	Teachers emails are for for internal communication only. The school central email is office@stannesardclough.ie Principal's email: principal@stannesardclough.ie
Homework Journal (folders and homework sheet for junior classes)	Teachers may use this to communicate with parents re any meetings, issues with child's work etc and parents are invited to use the journal for communication also. *NOTE: Currently, due to Covid restrictions, homework is sent home via See Saw or Aladdin and parents are invited to respond on these platforms or by emailing the office*
School Website www.stannesardclough.ie	Calendar and changes to calendar School Policies Information on Curriculum Photo Gallery Newsletter School News The Information for Parents section

School Booklets	Annual Booklet uploaded to website with key information on school organization
	Booklet for new Junior Infants- key information on starting school ; distributed at Information evening and online
Parent Teacher Meetings	Specially convened parent –teacher meetings are held in Term 1 for classes 1st-6th and in Term 2 for infants) These are arranged through the Aladdin app
	See note re meeting class teacher outside of formal PTMs
	Meeting with parents of children with special needs are arranged by the Special Needs teachers –direct contact with parents
	Parents are expected to participate as partners by contributing to Support Plans and signing Support Plans. Due to the nature of difficulties experienced by children with additional needs, it may be necessary for the support teacher to meet with you more regularly to review progress.
Online Learning	The See Saw App is used across all classes for online learning if and when needed
	The use of Microsoft teams for classes is being explored
	Work may also be sent via ALaddin
Information on Application to school/Admissions Policy	Information is available on the School website and through the School Office
Child Protection Catholic School Schedule	On display at school office
Communication Books	Some children may be given a communication booklet to support learning across school and home or as part of a behaviour plan. This is discussed with parents in advance
Information Meetings	The include:
	- Junior infants information evening
	- Meeting with parents of specific cohorts as needed
	- Organised talks for parents on identified topics
	- PSG AGM held in October each year
Collection of Data **School: Aladdin** **Department of Education: POD**	All parents are notified regarding the storage of child's/family information on the school Aladdin system and Department of Education POD system and the protection of data in same
	At times, there may be a change of family circumstances in the home. It is the school's policy to liaise with a legal guardian of the child. In the case that guardians require separate meeting or reports, it is the guardian's responsibility to notify the school. It is school policy that emergency contacts are provided to the school in the event that the legal guardians cannot be contacted directly.

Please note: Whats App groups set up by parents are not means of communication from the school and the school takes no responsibility for any information on same.

SNA support: SNAs support the care needs of the child under the supervision of the Class Teacher. It is essential that any communication regarding children who have SNA support occurs through the child's Class Teacher or Support Teacher only and not through the SNA.

Arranging to meet the Class Teacher

If a parent needs to meet his/her child's class teacher s/he is most welcome to do so.
The main way to do this is to arrange an appointment by emailing the school office/secretary.

Informal parent-teacher contact may occasionally occur as parents drop and collects children (infant classes). Regretfully, teachers are unable to enter into consultation with parents during formal teaching time. If a parent wishes to pass on information to the child's class teacher during these times he/she should communicate through the school office or principal.

Addressing Concerns:
Parents should, in the first instance, arrange to meet their child's class teacher to discuss concerns regarding their child. Teachers are happy to speak to parents and to help solve problems relating to pupils and their progress in school.

Following consultation with the class teacher, if a parent has further s/he should arrange to speak to the principal or deputy principal who will endeavour to assist in resolving any school-related problems a pupil may have.
Should a parent still feel that the problem or complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily s/he may decide to take the matter further. See Complaints Procedure (available from school).
Parents are reminded that staff in St Anne's is always prepared to listen and it is the policy of the school to resolve difficulties at an early stage and at local level, in the interests of pupils.

Registration of new entrants:

Parents of all new entrants are required to fill an application form. Once a place has been offered to the child, a registration form is issued. Details of the process are outlined in the school Admission Policy (see website/school office)

Transfer of pupils to/from another school
The Principal will engage with schools from which/to which any child moves once enrolment is confirmed with a view to transfer of information /reports.

Other Stakeholders:

- **Parents Association**

St Anne's has a Parents Support Group which represents the parents. The committee of the Parents' Support Group aims to promote the interests of all pupils at St Anne's in partnership with the B. O. M., the principal, the teaching staff, support staff and ancillary staff.
The committee of the PSG meets on a regular basis throughout the school year. The function of these meetings is to plan for school activities, to discuss and organise fund-raising activities and to advise the principal on general matters of concern to the parent body in the school.Individual parents are encouraged to assist at the various events organised for parents and pupils throughout the school year.

- **Board of Management**:

St Anne's has a properly constituted Board of Management comprised of nominees of the trustee, community, teachers and parents. The B.O.M. meets on a regular basis.
Note: Nominees on the Board of Management are not representative of the body from which they are nominated. Any issues to be brought to the Board of Management should be done by writing to the secretary of the Board.

- **Other Professional Organisations**:
From time to time the school engages with external organisations such as NDT, NEPS, and CPD professionals such as PDST, NCSE etc. Protocols are in place for such visits and interventions and permissions are sought from parents where support for children is being discussed.

Note: Members of the PSG, BOM and supporting visitors are garda-vetted in line with statutory requirements

- **Wider Community**
At St Anne's we believe the involvement of the wider community is a central part of children's education. We work to link with local clubs, community groups and to ensure that children have opportunities to visit local places of interest.

We welcome parent and community involvement through events such as Grandparents Day, School celebrations (eg opening of school library), inviting speakers to the school, involvement in local Tidy Towns etc.

Ratification and Implementation:

This policy has been devised in consultation with the staff, the Parents Support Group and the B. O. M. of St Anne's.

It was ratified by the Board of Management during 2019/20 school year (signed hard copy filed)

Review Date:

It is subject to ongoing review, particularly in exceptional circumstances, such as the current Covid -19 restrictions which may impact on formats of communication.